An Intelligence Gap

Experts Ask if Reports on Cuba Were Poor or Adapted to Policy

By HANSON W. BALDWIN

The effectiveness of the country's intelligence organization is again in question as a result of the Cuban crisis.

Considerable mystery, in the opinion of some members of Congress and military men, still surrounds the Administration's sudden decision to impose a blockade of Cuba after a missile build-up that must have started weeks or months ago. The questions being asked are primarily these:

News Analysis

Was the nation's factual information about the Communist military build-up in Cuba adequate in quantity and quality, and was there a long delay after the missiles actually arrived?

Were the interpretation and evaluation of this information influenced by policy considerations; in other words, were the estimates tailored to fit top policy beliefs? Or did Administration officials, until action was finally taken, reject the intelligence estimates as erroneous?

Has the marked centralization of intelligence activities in the two years of the Kennedy Administration improved or hampered the production of objective, nonpartisan intelligence analyses?

A Number of Surprises

The evidence so far available indicates that the Cuban missile build-up provided a number of surprises, not only to the public but also to Government officials.

Two types of missile bases have now been reported in Cuba or as under construction there.

One type of base accommodates the "medium-range," 1,000-mile missile. The most recently announced figures estimated that at least 30 of these missiles—presumably with nuclear warheads available—were in position in Cuba.

The second type of base has been described as accommodating the fixed site, "intermediate range," 2,2000-mile missile. Although construction work for six such bases is said to have been identified, presumably no missiles are yet in place. Yet it was estimated that one of these sites would be completed tomorrow, another Nov. 3 and another Dec. 1.

Soviet Army T-2, a two-stage 52-ton rocket. This, however, had been credited with a range of only 1,130 to 1,300 nautical miles instead of Washington's figure of 2,200.

Both types are apparently liquid-fuel rockets.

These facts indicate that the Russians either have developed rockets of types hitherto little known or unknown to Washington, or have reduced greatly the weight and bulk but not the power of the nuclear warheads they carry, or have an improved fuel.

It would seem likely that all three factors are involved.

U. S. Has None Comparable

In any case, the United States has no rockets quite comparable to those believed to be in Cuba. The longest-range mobile missile the nation possesses is the Army's Pershing, which is just becoming operational. It has a nominal range of more than 350 miles.

The Army long ago requested permission to develop, with the Pershing as a prototype, a longer-range missile with a top range of 1,000 miles, but its request was rejected by the Department of Defense. General Lauris Norstad has long urged the development of a mobile medium-range land-based missile for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, but the project is still in the planning stage.

In addition to the technological surprise at the types of Soviet missiles found in Cuba, there is general mustification sss vzu . yu there is general mustification about how the Russians could have built so many missile sites so quickly without warning. sssssssss

Most observers believe, indeed, that the intelligence files have been bulging over since the summer with indications. Some informed sources point out that the site for the 2,200-mile missile requires considerable construction.

The question that arises in the minds of many military men is whether the intelligence data that must have been collected throughout the summer and ... fall was accurately collated, or whether policy dictated the intelligence estimates or turned them aside.

McNamara Notes Mobility

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara said at a briefing during the crisis that the 1,000-mile missiles were "planned to have a capability to be deactivated, moved, reactivated on a new site, and ready for operations within a period of about six days."

Since this briefing other observers have said these mobile missiles could be emplaced in 16 to 18 hours.

Prior to the crisis there was no clear-cut indication that the Russians had developed missiles with the characteristics described. Even technical magazines noted no such missiles in their inventory of Soviet weapons.

The Russians are known to have used the German V-2 rocket of World War II as a prototype and to have developed relatively mobile and much-longer-range rockets from it. The V-2 required no fixed launching pad; it could be fired from a road, an aircraft runway, or any relatively hard, level surface.

The Soviet Army T-1 missile, classified as a medium-range ballistic missile, is a single-stage weapon, with a weight estimated at 44,000 pounds and a length of 62 feet. It has an estimated range of 400 to 600 miles.

One Paraded in Moscow

A modified version of this rocket, larger and longer, has been shown in Moscow parades. It was transported on specially designed trailers, which were hauled by tracked vehicles. However, no available estimates have indicated that the modified T-1 has anything like a 1,000 mile range.

The fixed-site intermediate-range rocket identified in Cuba could be a modification of the

Denials Are Cited

Military men point out that many Administration officials, including a high State Department official, were emphatically denying the existence of any offensive Soviet missiles in Cuba until just before the President's speech.

There has been worry that the centralization of intelligence facilities that has been forced in the last years might facilitate just this mistake—that policy rather than data might dictate the answers.

The individual intelligence agencies of the services have been greatly reduced and the task of preparing a single Defense Department intelligence analysis has been entrusted to a new Defense Intelligence Agency.

Similarly, John A. McCone was ordered by the President, when he became Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, to spend a major share of his time coordinationg and integrating all of the Government's intelligence agencies.

The danger, as some saw it, was that an enforced intelligence agreement or a single analysis might neglect or subordinate opposing or modifying evaluations. The danger was also seen that the top, tightly centralized intelligence control group would be unduly influenced by the knowledge of what current policy was.